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THE
REDEMPTION:
A POETICAL ESSAY.

By JOHN HEY, M.A. K..

FELLOW OF SIDNEY-SUSSEX COLLEGE.

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M.DCC.LXIII. I.

A Clause of Mr. SEATON's Will,
Dated Oct. 8. 1738.

I Give my Kilsingbury Estate to the University of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which shall be disposed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as be the Vice-Chancellor, the Master of Clare-Hall, and the Greek Professor for the time being, or any two of them shall agree. Which three persons aforesaid shall give out a Subject, which Subject shall for the first Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and so the succeeding Years, till the Subject is exhausted; and afterwards the Subject shall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of heart, &c. or whatsoever else may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Master of Clare-Hall, and Greek Professor, to be most conducive to the Honour of the Supreme Being and Recommendation of Virtue. And they shall yearly dispose of the Rent of the above Estate to that Master of Arts, whose Poem on the Subject given shall be best approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in English, and to be printed, the expence of which shall be deducted out of the product of the Estate, and the residue given as a reward for the Composer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verses.

WE the underwritten do assign Mr. SEATON's Reward to J. HEY, M.A. for his Poem on *The Redemption*, and direct the said Poem to be printed according to the Tenor of the Will.

October 8, 1763.

Pet. Ste. Goddard, Vicechancellor,
and Master of Clare-Hall.

M. Lort, Greek Professor.



(108) *CONTENTS.*

IN order to form a well-grounded judgment concerning any mysterious doctrine which is said to have been reveal'd by God, the first natural step seems to be, to examine whether the Body of Laws and Doctrines of which it is a part, is really of divine original, or only of human invention; if the concurrence of external and internal testimony makes it more probable that it is the former than the latter, the next step is to examine with all possible caution and candour, what is clearly said in the books so reveal'd concerning such doctrine. This being done, the only necessary enquiry which now remains is, whether any objections can be offer'd of such strength as to invalidate the former testimony: if not, the whole is to be receiv'd for truth. This then is the general plan of the following exercise; and in pursuance of it, the Author, after hinting at the modesty, plainness, moderation and openness to conviction with which subjects of this nature ought to be contemplated and discuss'd, (line 20-29) by way of introduction, first points out the external evidence of Revelation (30), then the internal (43), with the improbability of it's coming only from intelligent creatures superior to Man (85).—The prejudice from it's appearing strange is next shewn to be a groundless one (97); and the consistency of the whole story both with itself and the known circumstances of Mankind, a presumption in it's favour (105).

The rest of the contents are as follow. The History of the Fall, (115) — it's consequences; natural evil (180), moral (200), — the reasonable fears consequent upon the latter (213), — the gradual preparation of the world for the coming of the Messiah (224) — his life, sufferings, exaltation, with the benefits of them to men (235), — the assistance of the Holy Spirit (310).

Reflexions naturally following from the perusal of this history of Mankind — gratitude and obedience due to God (326-347) — Indifference whether men look for Happiness in consequence of the Redemption or not, presumptuous (343), and dangerous (353): new

relations cannot be reveal'd without imposing new obligations (361) — Repentance and care subsequent to an offence insufficient to take away it's guilt or punishment (372); two instances (377.) Our ignorance concerning the method how the sufferings of Christ redeem us from our sins, no objection to the divine original of the Gospel History (386); on the contrary such ignorance rather to be expected. 1. Because our knowing how they effected that end does not seem likely to answer any purpose to beings in a state of trial, or to open any new practical duties (390); 2. Because there are other general Laws of Providence, besides those by which our Redemption is effected, which we are ignorant of; and which at the same time it is more likely we should understand than those (399.) 3. Because our Redemption is a System, and therefore, as we see it only in part, we can see none of it completely, (417); two instances (429). — In Systems we can judge of the connexion between means and end only by experience — an instance (446). The universal prevalence of sacrifices over the world a presumption in favour of the propriety and efficacy of the Christian sacrifice (464). The way to lessen the ignorance complain'd of is to study the scriptures; the probability of this ignorance continuing till we come to know more of the misery which we escape by the Death of Christ, and of the happiness which we are to obtain (475). — 1st. Objection, concerning the prevention of the Fall, of no force to prove the History of the Redemption an human contrivance (488). — 2d. Objection, concerning the length of time taken up in effecting the Redemption, and the number of instruments employ'd, equally weak (535): as also the 3d. and last Objection, concerning the injustice of the innocent suffering for the guilty (556).

Conclusion. At the day of judgment all irregularities will be corrected, and moreover will appear to be so, to every one concern'd, (598). —

VSI IS TQMOIQ B'DODI EPMERORO

SH LEAVSW EDIPAS YHD UMA

THE REDEMPTION.

Whom shall the bard that dares of themes to sing
Such as th' Angelic Choir in wonder mute
Vainly * revolve, whom shall the bard invoke?
He trembles while he dares. Eternal Spirit!
Whom shall he call but thee? Thou think'st not scorn
To make thyself a lowly habitant 6
In the mean cottage of the human breast,
When Purity has been thy Harbinger:
Come then, and lead the Virtues in thy train;
Allot to each her office; ceaseless guard 10
Still let them hold around this earth-born heart,
And watch with closest glance its languid pulse,
And purge the bursting humors as they flow,
Lest Vice or Ignorance shou'd prompt a lay
To stain with foul disgrace the ways of Heav'n. 15

* 1 Pet. i. 12.

But

THE REDEMPTION,

But above all do thou Humility
 Come from thy chosen place remote ; thine eye
 Downcast advance, quicken thy loit'ring step,
 And mystic dew of Caution sprinkle round :

The empty word mysterious erase ; 20

The curious pride that rushes with bold step
 Into the awful counsels of Heav'n's King,
 Check ; — nor allow the gaitish paint of Art.

O may the strains glide even, uniform,
 Far diff'rent course from Fancy's light cascade ; 25
 Unruffled by the storms of Cruelty
 Gender'd in Persecution's gloomy cave :
 Free may they flow, transparent, uncongeal'd
 By th' icy breeze of Infidelity. 29

Heard ye that voice? sure 'twas the voice of Heav'n:
 In mild, majestic strains it pierc'd my ear,
 While Nature trembled at th' exalted sound
 Ev'n from her inmost frame ; what ailed thee
 That thou didst tremble ? that ev'n thou proud Sea
 Retiredst back with flight precipitate, 35
 Heap'd into monstrous mountains Chaos-like ?
 Why from the thirsty breast of flinty rock
 Gush'd the refreshing Stream ? why, fell Disease,

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7

Thy dreary habitations didst thou quit?
And thou, O Grave, ope thy voracious Jaw, 40
Yielding thy firm-seiz'd prey (unwonted gift)
At the dread sound? — 'twas sure the voice of Heav'n.

And now on adamantine tablet see
Engrav'd in characters indelible
Th' important embassy; ye Learned read, 45
And tell us — did the vast, stupendous chain,
Deliver'd by the great Creator erst
Into the hands of Nature, and since held
By her with grasp unshaken, burst it's hold
Obedient to some noxious Spirit of air, 50
(If true, how passing strange!) only to cast
Still thicker darkness round our filmy eyes?
Or is the message of a kindlier sort?
Displays it scenes such as from human eye
Malice wou'd hide for ever? — say ye Learn'd, 55
It's Laws how fram'd? steal they with wily art
Fair-promising into th' unwary breast,
And there diffuse their pois'nous juices round,
First pleasing, then destroying? or proclaim they
First trial, then reward? Tend they to bless. 60
The brutal appetite, or purer mind?

Whom

Whom do they claim their Author? Him who made
 And will us happy! speak, O ye that gaze
 Intent upon the dazzling adamant! — Behold they smile propitious! and lo, now 65
 With nod benign they prompt our timid steps
 To join their labours, and with studious eye,
 Trace out the treasures of the sacred page!

Here may I stand infix'd! in rapturous awe
 Collecting the bright rays of truth that beam! 70
 From ev'ry point resistless: narrow orb! 75
 O that thou didst avail thyself t' expand,
 And catch the blaze of each illustrious beam! H
 That thy refracting powers cou'd quench this glare,
 And give to ev'ry image that thou form'st, 80
 Grace of distinctness! but it may not be! 85
 Yet much is clear: yes, num'rous are the rays! O
 That dart instruction on this weakly sight! H
 And mark the truths to Man of chief import,
 And light him on to human happiness! 80
 — Here may I stand infix'd! until this mind! —
 Is saturate with pure wisdom from above, 90
 And till this heart imbibes the generous warmth!
 That brooks no limit of benevolence.

'Tis

A POETICAL ESSAY.

9

'Tis Heav'nly all! no spirit of *human* mould, 85
Gross and impure, cou'd dare such lofty flights
Ev'n on Imagination's waxen wings.
Come then such tidings from the spirits of *air*?
Vain thought! the *good* obey their Maker's will;
Far diff'rent task from spreading to the eye 90
Of wand'ring mortals, meteors of deceit;
And never did *malignant* Dæmon joy
To shew all worlds the fount of human bliss,
And wave the ensigns of his own defeat.
Ah no! 'tis Heav'nly all! 95

Here read we then the story of our race;
Strange—wond'rous tale! — yet is it therefore false?
Surmise of narrow mind! ev'n truth is strange
If now it first appear to human view,
Or if 'tis but illumin'd partially, 100
Here bright and there obscure; did now this hand
First move, the Sun *first* rise, that plant *first* grow,
Wou'd not all view them with astonishment?
— But is the signet of Heav'n's gracious King
Impress'd on error? Truth and Falsehood's dregs 105
Can they Incorporate in one friendly mass?
Ah no! scarce ere can Falsehood with itself

B

Form

THE REDEMPTION,

Form a consistence; and 'twixt that and truth
There is a strong repulsive faculty,
That spurns th' attempt of mixture so impure. 110

—Here read we then the Story of our Race;
But read with cautious fear; lest Falsehood fly,
Cloth'd in Conjecture's captivating guise,
Win us unwary to her foul embrace.

Form'd from the dust the Parent of mankind 115
Possess'd each faculty by Heav'n decreed
For use or ornament of *Man*: no want
He knew, no imperfection he perceiv'd;
Save what all things endued with conscious sense
Must ever feel; dependence on their Lord, 120
The first eternal Being: wholesome food
Was his repast; not chos'n, as by his Sons,
After experiment where Danger lurks
And frequent Death; but vegetating free
Within that space where his unarmed foot 125
Trod with security the harmless turf,
And gather'd as the voice of Heav'n enjoin'd.
Far, sure, must be Disease from this blest scene,
And Weariness and wan Infirmity:
Yet was the human body moulded erst 130

Of

A POETICAL ESSAY.

II

Of Matter, still divisible ; whose parts,
Knowing nor sense nor self-connecting pow'r,
Time soon had moulder'd into native dust,
Had not the word of the Creator bid
That Tree arise, whose salutary fruit 135
Convey'd Refreshment with perfection big,
Preserving pow'r obnoxious to decay,
In the full vigour of immortal youth.

— Diff'rence of good and ill for man to know
Was needless sure, while with the fearless eye 140
Of an obedient son, he might look up
To the Almighty Father of his race,
And claim his guidance ; to that Heav'nly Friend
He might appeal, whose all-perceiving ken
Distance deceiv'd not, number ne'er confus'd, 145
Who saw all qualities of all things : Whence
To Man so favour'd, cou'd there ere arise
Temptation to do evil ? whence a cause
Why one sensation he shou'd ere conceal,
Why caution or protection he shou'd use ? 150
No ; 'twas in naked purity he rov'd,
Needing nor Art's concealment nor defence.
Led by the silken cords of Heav'nly Love,

THE REDEMPTION,

He trod the paths of Safety; yet not boundless bly
 In iron chain of dire Necessity; on ;¹⁵⁵ *the*
 For conscious Liberty impell'd him within, ev'g igni
 And rais'd the heart-felt glow of self-applause
 At each obedient act. twas Liberty,
 Not, as of late time, harassing the soul
 With everlasting doubt; impelling oft
 In various paths; paths terminating all,¹⁶⁰ *His*
 In thickest clouds of dread obscurity;
 But to one only doubt twas all confin'd;
 Whether the rank of mortals new created
 To God their guide shou'd constantly appeal,¹⁶⁵ *it*
 Or Man himself shou'd be the guide of Man.
 O fatal Curiosity and Pride
 (Fatal tho' rais'd by such bewitching arts)
 That Candour pities, while stern Justice blames,) ¹⁷⁰
 Ye made the hazardous, th' important Choice
 Yet had the ear of Man imbib'd this threat
 In unsuspected force: (for knows the heart
 Suspicion, unexperienc'd in deceit?)
 " The fruit of Life shall never bedew thy lips,¹⁷⁵
 " If such thy choice twas Mercy, gracious Heav'n,
 Pronounc'd this sentence 'gainst Man's first revolt:

Mild was the Law that will'd but to recall
A voluntary gift ; no other ill ensues to him but the
Ensuing, save what from the choice itself. 180
Flow'd of necessity. Yet, O just God !
In what o'erwhelming torrents does it flow !
The beams of Heav'nly light strike not his eye ;
He wanders lost in Danger's thickest maze,
His only guide a faint and glimmering lamp : 185
At ev'ry turn see Mischief sudden start,
While oft her Remedy in deepest shade
Shuns ev'n th' exploring eye of Diligence.
How frequent are his falls ! th' unnotic'd step
Scarce ever safe, th' experience ev'n of Age 190
Of weak avail, to tread the maze unhurt.
Now see this Lord of earth protect his head
From elements created for his good ;
And now the impulse of his nature check,
Till Time informs him, whether, on the whole, 195
It tends to Mis'ry or to Happiness.
Behold him, or envelop'd in Distrust,
Or running into ever-present ill,
Productive soon of endless diffidence.

blim But

But the grand source of Mist'ry still remains 200
 Unnotic'd: When the all-creative pow'r
 Into existence call'd the race of Man,
 Relations beautiful were form'd twixt him
 And certain modes of action; proper, meet
 To make him happy, and to be the test 205
 Of his obedience; consonant to these
 He still had acted under God his guide;
 But since Ambition snatch'd the dang'rous rein,
 Eager to drive o'er arduous paths unknown, 210
 What Sun has seen these Laws inviolate?
 What Man can strike the pure unconscious breast?
 And yet, presumptuous reas'ner, wilt thou say
 No ill shall follow? wherefore then these Laws?
 Or can that ill be adequately paid 215
 To men yet subject to perpetual falls?
 Incredible! Hence see a length of woe
 To which no bounds appear; stretch ere so far
 The aking eye of Fancy, till there frowns
 The threat'ning storm of misery beyond? 220
 It's gloom still heighten'd by the awful truth,
 Th' indisputable truth, that God is just.
 — But read again the Story of our race.—

Scarce had this revolution of our fate
Left us in horror of the thickest night, 225
When Mercy 'gan to dart a twilight beam,
And gave to Man a faint and distant hope,
That the bright Sun of righteousness wou'd rise,
And dissipate this gloom of black Despair.
— And now the rays of consolation glance
With growing lustre thro' th' illumin'd air;
Till ev'ry eye, caught by the orient beams,
Expectant turns towards the resplendent East,
To view the glorious brightness of his rising.

The Son of God is born; in form of Man, 235
He passes thro' the changes of our life,
And spotless, bears th' infirmities of guilt;
Republishes that ancient law of Heav'n
Which Man was first ordained to obey;
And tho' disguis'd, impair'd, disfigur'd, clog'd, 249
Displays it in it's genuine purity,
And all it's native comeliness of form.
His steps are prompted by Benevolence,
His glare of greatness soften'd by the shade
Of mild deportment; from his modest lips, 245
Expires th' incense bland of Heav'ly Truth.

— But

— But, O great Lord of all! what piercing scenes
 Now snatches my eye ingenuous o'er the page!
 Mis'ry rates v'st glanct! On quicker' far ion 't ill
 Than cold Expression's pace it darts along. — 250
 O Treachery! Ingratitude! blind Sebti!
 What havock do ye make! — Blest innocence!
 How dost thou groan beneath those dreadful pangs
 Which Guilt that only caus'd, shou'd only feel!

— But soft! ev'n Mis'ry, so eventful, wills 255
 To be recorded, nay, and ponder'd o'er
 With thought deliberate. Shall Astonishment,
 Or Gratitude or Pity sway the breast,
 While we again peruse the tragic tale?

The Son of God, a voluntary Victim, — 260
 Spotless himself, to buy devoted Man,
 To reinstate him in his lost domain,
 To give for present, future pow'r o'er Death,
 To ope the friendly portal of Repentance,
 And guide the tott'ning step of Piety. — 265
 Thro' her long pilgrimage, to certain bliss,
 — Dies! confusion shrink each tow'ring thought,
 Each lustful appetite, each wild desire!
 Affliction thou may'st raise thy drooping head,

Thou

Thou Misty smile ! th' moving is thy delight 270
While Man's Redeemer hangs upon the Cross ! Now
But let not grief thou from ! the tender heart is M
It burst resistless, atop th's important task, T his coolness
Peruse we still the story of our race ! Teacher ! O
— Such are the virtues of this Victim ! ^{that past is} Yet 275
Yet virtues not promiscuously bestow'd, yet how
On those alone derived in full extent, that did W
Whose steady will can spurn the present good, —
And wait the need of dim Futurity ; To be recorded
Whose humble mind, careless of self-desert, ^{ordi} 280
On him can fix it's persevering hopes. Of Christiane
Hopes, not vain Fancy's fabric, light as air, W
Bursting, like bubbles, on a near approach, se T
But founded on firm Reason's solid rock : Sooty
For lo, the son of Man from the cold grave 285
Triumphant rises ; — hast thou now no doubt evir o T
Whether this great, stupendous sacrifice ^{ere ago} o T
Avails to draw the pois'nous sting of Death, ^{but} A
He rises ; abttaidrag a tedious life q gnoi rsi o T
'Midst mortal frailties, but are long too spring ! see 290
From this gross earth, and claim a purer laishul Each
At the right hand of Majesty on high, with noisifl A

To fit, with never-fading glory crownd,
His name, throughout Creation's ample range,
Far above ev'ry other name extoll'd; 295
Of Being that exists on Earth's domain,
Or thro' the fathomless abyss of Heavn.
Touch'd with a feeling of infirmities,
Such as deprav'd Humanity laments,
With ceaseless intercession there he pleads ; 300
Perfcts our wretched sacrifice of pray'r
And frail obedience ; 'fore the throne of God
Off'ring them up with the accepted claim
Of his prevailing Merits : gives our tears
The wond'rous efficacy to blot out 305
The stains of Guilt, indelible before ;
And waits the round of Time to judge the World,
And introduce the honest Penitent
Into the ceaseless glory of his Lord.
But sure in Eden's grove God was the guide 310
“ Of wand'ring Man ; and shall th' anointed Son
“ Only in part restore the charter lost
“ By disobedient choice of our first Sire ?
To strike thee dumb, read here — the Spirit of God
From Heav'n descending, dwells in dome of clay ; 315

In mode far passing human thought, his guides,
 Impells, instructs: intense pursuit of Good
 And cautious flight of Evil he suggests,
 But in such gentle murmurs, that to know
 His Heav'nly voice, we must have done his will: 320
 Such dictates only *Liberty* obeys;
 Th' *undoubted* voice of Heav'n a guide unapt
 For beings now experienc'd in ill,
 And doom'd to walk the wild, perplexing paths
 Of constant Trial and Uncertainty. 325

Such is the wond'rous story of our Race:
 — Prostrate thyself, O Man! With lowly heart
 And wonder-closed lips—pause—think—revolve!
 Think what thou art, and that the great Supreme
 Has design'd to visit thine infirmities. 330
 Think of that tie which binds thy Nature's laws;
 What sacred magic must pervade each link,
 When all the pow'rs of Heav'n and Earth are mov'd
 At it's disunion! O with horror think 335
 Of each rebellious action or intent:
 For now thou know'st how evil unforeseen,
 May flow in changeless tenor, ev'n from Laws
 Promulg'd by Wisdom and Benevolence.

THE REDEMPTION,

— But thanks be to the Father of mankind,
 Who op'd this avenue to real bliss,
 Remov'd each gloomy shade of natural fear,
 And on a solid base establish'd Hope,
 Pointing the way to Immortality!
 Is there the Man, who hesitates to join
 This song of gratitude? exists there one,
 Blindly presumptuous, who dares to claim
 From Justice his deserved happiness?
 Is there, that with a senseless disregard,
 Casts the cold eye of Indolence along
 This sacred Tablet? careless if he draw
 The living water from this purer source,
 Or from the troubled wells of his Forefathers?
 If thou, my friend, art such, O hear the voice
 That shouts to wake thee from thy fatal dream:
 Think with what cries the partner of thy Soul
 Wou'd rend the air, if on the narrow brink
 Of yon tremendous rock, he saw thee dance
 With heedless mirth? O think thou hear'st them now!
 Wou'dst thou restore thy shatter'd limbs to plead
 Thy disregard of danger? — But from whence
 This careless ease? Does the great Lord of Heav'n

Reveal the nice Relations of thy State,
Regardless of the Duties which ensue?
Are thy Redeemer and thy Heavy'nly Guide
Made known, to be neglected or despis'd? 365
Sooner shall Sophistry pervert my mind
To think that harden'd wretch of Heav'n approv'd,
Who leaves his Parent, aged and infirm,
To crawl thro' life in unsupported woe;
Or yields the hapless Orphan, or the Poor 370
To the Oppressor's unrelenting fangs.
— Thou say'st that sorrow will draw down the eye
Of Mercy from above: that future care
Will soon extenuate the past offence:
But from what region do the magic pow'r's 375
Of Fancy conjure up this airy Hope?
Goto the Sensual; do his bitterest tears
Avail to bring back Plenty to his board?
Or can they from his wasting limbs remove
The pestilential gnawing of Disease? 380
Go to the dread tribunal of the Law,
And hear the Murderer plead the rufirous Suns
That saw no repetition of his crimes.
Does the greatest Lord Say,

Say, does he thus ward off the fatal blow?

Justice is deaf to the unmeaning plea.

But still methinks the frown of Discontent

Sits low'ring on thy brow; thou woud'st be taught,

"What virtue is in voluntary Death?"

"To reconcile offenders to their Judge?"

But say, shou'd silence give thy needless doubts,

To spend themselves in air; dar'st thou conclude,

The voice we heard was not the voice of Heav'n?

What province in the guidance of the world

Dost thou uphold, that all the secret springs

Of Government must be display'd to thee?

Presumptuous reptile! it is thine to know,

What it is thine to practise: all the rest,

To thee obscure, to God is clear as Day.

— Remember too — "the Universal Cause,

"Acts not by partial, but by general Laws;"

Remember that of these, tho' some thou see'st,

Myriads are hid from thine all-curious eye;

While Nature's prodigies before thee move,

Convincing thee of ignorance profound,

Tell me the Law whereby the Earthquake's rage

Instant o'erwhelms in ruin unforeseen.

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The

A POETICAL ESSAY.

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The boasted monuments of Human pride :
Why the Volcano pours his liquid fire ;
Why Pestilence and Famine stalk the earth,
And ravage uncontroll'd ? th' unnumber'd laws 410
Unfold, to which thou giv'st one empty name
Of Chance. Shall these, vain man ! elude thy search,
Enacted for the ordinary course
Of Nature's operations ; and shalt thou
Murmur at the obscurity of those 415
Deriv'd from Exigency's latent springs ?

Once more that Adamantine Tablet view ;
The grand Redemption of degener'ate Man
Is not a single, independent act,
But one great System ; that perchance involv'd 420
In the one only greater, God's high Law
Pervading and supporting ev'ry part
Of the stupendous Universe : to thee
Dark are this System's limits ; nay, the whole
To thee unknown, fave some minuter spots 425
Display'd to shew the part thou haft to act
In the alarming Scene. But know that he
Who of a System fees but part, fees none.
Behold yon stately Edifice ; where Art

And Nature lavish all their richest stores, 430

To charm thine eye with Majesty and Grace :

— Let all, save that small fragment, now be veil'd : —

Say, do it's beauties strike without impair ?

Where is the Symmetry that smil'd around,

The Greatnes that so dazzled ? where the Use 435

That warm'd the Judgment into Admiration ?

Alas, the veil was drawn, and they are fled.

— Think'st thou the Indian, tho' before the Sun

He bend the knee of worship, can conceive

Ought of those Glories which ev'n thou conceiv'st, 440

Who see'st him roll around his ponderous Mass,

Enliv'ning ev'ry Planet in his train ;

And in their rapid courses while they sing,

With godlike firmness curbing their bold flight,

And poizing them in heav'nly harmony ? 445

He who on Systems oft with serious care

Has fix'd Attention's eye, must oft have seen

The tendency of parts to work their ends,

Diff'ring from his opinion preconceiv'd.

Who of ye all, that murmur at the means

By the Supreme for Man's Redemption chose,

(Forgetting all that sage *Experience* taught,) 450

Shall

Shall see yon Peasant hide within the ground,
Far from his anxious view, the precious grain,
His great support and friend, in stedfast hope 455
Soon to behold it yield a glad increase;
And shall not strait put forth the friendly hand
To check the progress of his wild design?
— Ask we, in short, where 'tis ye find the chain,
Which here ye want, connecting *means* with *end*? 460
Shall ye not say, “*Experience* is our guide?”
Where then your guide is blind, how weak the hope
To find the latent object of your search!

But tell me, can thy mem’ry range thro’ time,
Ev’n from the first Creation of our Race, 465
And see the scatter’d tribes of varying men
Recurring to the feeble victim’s aid
To expiate the guilt of past offence;
Both where the light of Revelation shone,
And where dim Reason shed a fainter ray; 470
Can’t thou such Uniformity behold,
Nor yet presume there is a Law of God,
Whereby the sacrifice of his dread Son
Avails to purchase immortality?
— If still Impatience or Suspicion haunt 475

Thy mind, where Knowledge will not deign to dwell;
 Wonder that holy Trinitie's precious lore;
 Perchance, to recompence thy modest search,
 New light may beam from the great Count of light,
 And pathways, hitherto untrodd, appear. 480
 But sure we may with confidence unblam'd his
 Dare to pronounce, that while the low'ning mists
 Of human ignorance so deeply obbly of time & space
 The mis'ry we escape, and bliss we gain; meddled
 No eye so clearly shall perceive the means 485
 Of gaining or escaping, as to judge,
 With Reason's suffrage, how they work their end.

“ Ign'rance the narrow mind of man may brook:
 “ But shall Insensibility's cold hand 490
 “ Allay all ferment betwixt Right and Wrong,
 “ Wife and Unwife? that were to leave no prafe
 “ Due ev'n to God. Perfist we then to say,
 “ That to prevent more suits the Good and Wise,
 “ Than to permit, what must anon be heal'd.”

Be not deceiv'd: we seek not here to find 495
 A self-existent Being good and wise,
 Or such thou own'st, or groundless all debate
 Of the unfolding his mysterious will:

This

This wou'd we know; whether the same great Lord,
Who over Nature's powers so blynde presides, 500
Did doubtless utter this alarming Voice, or
And bid this holy Tablet be engrav'd.

Arise then, thou that wou'dst prevent our Fall,
Arise, and let us see thee rule the world
After thy darling principle: from thence 505
Judge we, if to the same one point converge
Thy schemes, and the decrees of Nature's God:
— Behold yon circle of domestic friends,
Each to his nightly couch serene retire, 510
Unconsciots of the fatal Spark which, shed 515
From Indiscretion's brandish'd torch, now pants
And labours to diffuse it's baleful pow'rs!
Heav'n's! with what horror do the bursting flames
Dissolve the seal of Sleep! Amazement starts,
And wild Confusion bounds with frantic step 520
Throughout the tott'ring mansion: How to fly,
The first, great care. O desperate resource!
Behold that tender Youth spring from on high
And trust himself to Air: Alas! too sure
Some feeble Limb is shatter'd by the fall: 525
But see Compassion's friendly hand stretch'd out

To mitigate the anguish of his Country
And Med'cine's balth' soothing the Body's pain,
Able, ere long, Health's afflites to restore.

Had thy superior wisdom governed here,
This scene Had been *prevented*, then what need
To clog the mind with dull Discretion's bonds,
Or goad it with Compassion's pungent spur,
Or give to natural bodies Hearing pow'rs?
— Thy scheme no doubt is wise: but yet methinks
Boasts not a freedom from these slight defects;
— Man first of human nature it despoils;
Then bids the Lord of Heav'n reverse that plan
His Wisdom form'd before the birth of Time.

“ Be then this Ill permitted; and it’s cure 535
“ Reserv’d in Mercy’s inexhausted stores;
“ But can that remedy proceed from Heav’n
“ Which wills us to conceive th’ Almighty Powr
“ Lab’ring thro’ years, with cumb’rous instruments,
“ Imploring too a Mediator’s aid,
“ Ere he his gracious purpose can effect? 540
“ — Better Befits his pow’r to speak the word
“ And heal.” — But say dost thou expect a change
Sudden and self-effected to arise

From the great God of Nature shew us then
Some upstart to being perfect at its birth, 545
Or instant perishing without decay.
Shew us the Hand of Providence unarm'd
With instrument, or senseless, or inform'd.
How did thy mind, thy bddy, all thy pow'rs
Attain that fulness of Maturity? 550
And whence the Good and Evil of thy state,
But from the creatures of thy Sov'reign Lord?
His Scourge, the Tyrant, his Reward the Friend,
His Gift the Fruits of earth, his Messengers
The Winds, his Minister the flaming Fire. 555

“ Grant then that thus to remedy is wise;
“ Yet does the God of Justice disregard
“ If guilt or Innocence be doom'd to pain?”
Hence with the impious thought! but dost thou deem
That voice was not the voice of Nature's God, 560
Because it publish'd our deliv'rance wrought
By suff'rance meek of voluntary woe?
Alas! full little dost thou mark the scenes
Of Providence, which flit before thine eye.
How oft in them is wretchedness of Guilt 565

Al-

Alleviated by suff'ring Innocence !

— Mark that impetuous Youth : the fev'rish fire

Of Passion seizes all his nobler pow'rs :

The Phantom Pleasure trips with airy swim

Before his dazzled eye : mark the pursuit

570

How eager, how intense ! — and now he hopes

To grasp her in his arms — and now she flies —

Ever at distance, seeming ever near.

At length behold her vanish from his view,

When lo, a grisly band of pallid Fiends,

575

The meager train of Want, surround and seize

Him languid with pursuit ; now see him bound

In squalid fetters by Profusion knit,

Stranger to Liberty, and the pure breath

Of wholesome air. Despair mean while aloof, 580

Hovers expectant of her destin'd prey.

— But whence that hoary sage who enters there,

The meek tears stealing down his furrow'd cheeks,

And Virtue's footsteps printed on his brow ?

His staff a weak support for Age and Grief ! 585

— Sure 'tis Paternal Love : mark with what care

He gazes on the guilty Youth ! how mild

Are

A POETICAL ESSAY.

31

Are his reproaches, and his Soul how bent
To rescue him from Slavery and Woe,

Regardless of the ill himself must bear? 590

— Can't thou see this, nor own thy Nature's Law
Decrees such friendly interchange of pain,
While we are passing thro' this vale of tears?

— And from whence is it, that the Son of God
Shall not, if such his gracious will, assist 595
In the grand progress towards eternal bliss,
And suffer for the guilty race of Men?

But let Contention cease: wait we the Hour,
When all things shall arrive to that one point
Whereto they have converg'd ere since the World
Was first awak'd from Chaos into Life. 601

When all the parts of this unfinish'd Scheme
Shall be compacted in one perfect Whole;
And what was deem'd unfit, shall strike the eye
With all it's genuine Symmetry and Grace. 605

Then shall the Justice and Benevolence
Of our Eternal Lord unclouded shine;
Seen by Reflection's broken rays no more;
Themselves the naked objects of our view.

Then

Then shall the great Redeemer of Mankind, 610
Nay ev'ry meaner Sufferer, receive
The meed, tho' long-reserv'd, of ten-fold Bliss:
And Mercy hide in her maternal Breast
The shame of him, who trembles to look up
To the Tribunal of the Righteous Judge. 615

LXXXV.

F I N I S.